



LIN 6720: Second Language Acquisition

Spring 2011

Place: MAT 0002, Wednesday Periods 8-10

Prof. Jason Rothman
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Office hours:
M, 1-2; W, 1:30-2:30
or by appointment

Course Description:

This course offers an introduction at the graduate level to the study of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) theory from a multitude of perspectives. A focus is placed on comparative theoretical SLA epistemology as well as issues pertaining to the designing and undertaking of empirical research in adult language acquisition. An emphasis is placed on the study of SLA from cognitive science perspectives. The course will focus on three main areas: (a) an introduction into major SLA theories; (b) research methodology, and (c) formal SLA linguistic theories.

Textbooks (required):

VanPatten, B. & Williams, J. (2006). *Theories in Second Language Acquisition: An Introduction*. Hillsdale, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

White, L. (2003). *Second Language Acquisition and Universal Grammar*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Other Suggested References (for background reading and consultation)

Crain, S. & Thornton, R. (1998). *Investigations in universal grammar: a guide to experiments on the acquisition of syntax and semantics*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Doughty, C. & Long, M. (2005). *The handbook of second language acquisition*. Blackwell Publishing.

Gass, S. & Mackey, A. (2007). *Data Elicitation for Second and Foreign Language Research*. Hillsdale, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Gass, S. & Selinker, L. (2008). *Second language acquisition: An introductory course* (Third Edition). Hillsdale, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Long, M. (2007). *Problems in SLA*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Publishers.

Mackey, A. & Gass, S. (2005). *Second Language Research: Design and Methodology*. Hillsdale, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Ortega, L. (2009). *Understanding Second Language Acquisition*. London: Hodder Education

Long, M. (2007). *Problems in SLA*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Publishers.

Course Requirements/Grading assessment

Classroom presentations	25% (15% leading class, 10% final project)
Article/Chapter Summaries	10%
Final Exam	25%
Final Research Paper	40%

Attendance and Participation: Attendance is mandatory. You are allowed one absence for any reason you wish. Please use this absence wisely since any further absence unless excused by the professor will result in your grade being lowered one level (e.g. from an A to A-).

All students are required to actively participate and contribute to class discussions of the readings. This is especially important on the days that you are NOT presenting. Each student must bring to class at least one question related to the readings to be discussed as your student colleagues takes charge of the class each week. Since this is to be expected as a minimum requirement you receive no credit for this, however, failure to do so consistently will result in the lowering of your overall grade, at the professor's discretion, as much as a full grade level (e.g. from A→B).

Presentations: Each week, a set of two to three students will be responsible for leading the discussion based on the topic of the readings we have for that week. As part of this task, you will prepare as a group notes to be distributed in class that summarize the chapter read and provide a list of discussion questions you will use in class. In a separate sheet, you will provide the professor with the answers to your discussion questions that reflect the thoughts of the group who is charged with presenting. You will design activities and the like that challenges your colleagues to demonstrate their understanding while also showing your acquired expertise in the area via your group's extra preparation. It is crucial that you present a discussion of the methodology that is used empirically within various theoretical approaches; this WILL require your working as a group outside the confines of the chapter being summarized within authentic texts and/or secondary sources that give you the means to fully understand, teach and critique these methodologies. You need not agree with particular methodological tenability, in fact, a good discussion will include criticisms and suggestions for improvement. DO NOT summarize everything in the chapter (we will have all read it) and DO NOT provide a script to read. Your responsibility is to LEAD a thoughtful discussion. Be prepared to ask questions of your classmates and know the answers. Everyone will do this twice throughout the semester.

Chapter summaries: You are responsible for 9 chapter summaries corresponding to the 9 weeks you will not be leading class discussion. These should be no longer than two typed pages and are meant as notes for you as well as a means to help you organize your thoughts and maximize your understanding of the chapters prior to class presentations. You must keep these in a binder and bring that binder to class each period. I will go around the class when you are doing activities designed by the class discussion leader groups each week to check that this is being done (well). You receive full credit as long as it is done exhaustively. Doing these well will be your ULTIMATE study guide for the final exam, which will simply cover the information in these chapters.

Final Project: For your final project, you will design a study investigating the acquisition of a grammatical domain in which you can test the (opposing) predictions of at least two theoretical positions covered in class. You need to have a fully done pilot with at least 15 participants by the time the paper is turned due. As a result, it is crucial that you start to work on this as soon as possible. Within the first three weeks of the semester, you need to have had an appointment with Professor Rothman in which your topic is finalized. We can DISCUSS the possibility of joint projects the first day of class.

Project Summary: This is to be a professional style abstract of your final project (i.e. suitable for submission to a call for papers) to be turned in on the four class meeting (Feb. 9th). It cannot be over two pages (1 inch margins, 12 pt. Times New Roman single spaced).

Empirical Research Paper draft 1: This is due April 6th. It need not be a full version with a full analysis (you might very well still be collecting data). However, it should be fully

articulated and developed in terms of ideas. The more complete the paper is, the more comments I can give you.

Final Paper: Due April 27th. Paper should be between 8-12 pages single spaced.

Formatting and Style Guide: All written assignments must follow **APA** style (*Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, latest edition*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association. <http://apastyle.apa.org/>. No other format will be accepted.

Final Exam: The final exam is scheduled for 3-5 April 25th.

Course Schedule

Week (date)	Topic	Reading	Discussion leader group
1/05	Introduction to Class: What is SLA?		
1/12	A crash course on Research Methodology in Adult Language Acquisition	Handout given by Professor Rothman	Professor Rothman leads the class
1/19	Theories in SLA & SLA History What are the older theories and what have they told us?	VP&W: Chapters 1 & 2	1) _____ 2) _____ 3) _____
1/26	Linguistic Theory, UG and SLA	White, L: Chapter 3 VP&W	1) _____ 2) _____ 3) _____
2/2	Functional Approaches to SLA	Bardovi-Harlig, K.: Chapter 4 VP&W	1) _____ 2) _____ 3) _____
2/9	Associative-Cognitive CREED	Ellis, N. Chapter 5 VP&W	1) _____ 2) _____ 3) _____
2/16	Skill Acquisition Theory	DeKeyser, R.: Chapter 6 VP&W	1) _____ 2) _____ 3) _____
2/23	Input Processing	Van Patten, B Chapter 7 VP&W	1) _____ 2) _____ 3) _____
3/2	Processability Theory	Pienemann, M Chapter 8 VP& W	1) _____ 2) _____ 3) _____

3/16	Interactionist Theory	Gass & Mackey Chapter 10 VP&W	1) _____ 2) _____ 3) _____
3/23	Sociocultural Theory	Lantof & Thorne Chapter 11 VP&W	1) _____ 2) _____ 3) _____
3/30	UG approaches again: Principles in L2 acquisition and the initial state	White (2003) Chapters 2 & 3	1) _____ 2) _____ 3) _____
4/6	Beyond the initial state and ultimate attainment	White (2003) Chapters 4 & 8	1) _____ 2) _____ 3) _____
4/13	Paper Presentations		1) _____ 2) _____ 3) _____ 4) _____ 5) _____ 6) _____ 7) _____ 8) _____
4/20	Paper Presentations		1) _____ 2) _____ 3) _____ 4) _____ 5) _____ 6) _____ 7) _____ 8) _____

Other information:

Please turn off cellular phones during class and please make every effort to arrive on time to class ready for discussion. Being more than 7 minutes late to the start of the course will count as an absence on each third occasion of such tardiness.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Academic Integrity

All students are required to abide by the Academic Honesty Guidelines which have been accepted by the University. The UF Honor Code reads:

We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity.

On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” For more information please refer to <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/studentguide>.

Accommodations

Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation. For more information see <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc>.

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